

that a busy bustling overseas and back constitutes statesmanship. The Jews have suffered from the personal ambitions and pathetic incapacity of some of their most advertised men.

The B'nai B'rith has this much in its favor: its leadership has always been progressive. Only when it has lent itself as local agent for the "leaders" of the New York Kehillah has it set up in its neighborhoods those influences which tend toward division instead of a better understanding.

Under whose inspiration it was that the B'nai B'rith undertook to bring its great power to bear against one of Shakespeare's plays, cannot now be said; but it has been most unfortunate for Jewish influence in all directions. Successful—oh, yes; but such a success as serious people could well do without.

Merely to glance over the record is interesting:

1907—Jews force "The Merchant of Venice" to be dropped from public schools in Galveston, Texas; Cleveland, Ohio; El Paso, Texas; Youngstown, Ohio.

1908—Jews have "The Merchant of Venice" eliminated from the English course in the high school at El Paso, Texas.

1910—Apparently the "Merchant" slipped back into Cleveland schools, for in April the superintendent of public schools issued an order that it was not to be used again.

1911—Rabbi Harry W. Ettleson and Solomon Elsner request the Hartford, Connecticut, school board to have "The Merchant of Venice" dropped from the reading list of the schools. The board complies.

1912—Jewish residents of Minneapolis, Minnesota, inaugurate a movement to have "The Merchant of Venice" dropped from the public schools.—In Boston, Massachusetts, the superintendent of schools refuses to withdraw "The Merchant of Venice" as a textbook, on the demand of Rabbi Phineas Israeli.

1916—On demand of Jews the New Haven, Connecticut, board of education votes to prevent the reading of "The Merchant of Venice," and extends the prohibition to "Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare" until an edition is published which omits the play.

And so on down the list of cities. A diversion was created by the Jewish attack on Sargent's painting entitled "The Synagogue" in the art scheme of the Boston Public Library. Many denunciatory resolutions were adopted throughout the country with regard to that, but the painting is still there.

### The Jewish Idea of "Rights"

IT IS all part of one mistaken program, to prohibit free speech, with reference to the Jew. It is utterly at one side of all that American principles mean. Shut him up! Boycott him! Tear down his painting! Bar his words from the mails and public library!—what a waste of energy and what a self-judgment such an attitude is!

And it has become pretty general. Last Christmas most people had a hard time finding Christmas cards that indicated in any way that Christmas commemorated Someone's Birth. Easter they will have the same difficulty in finding Easter cards that contain any suggestion that Easter commemorates a certain event. There will be rabbits and eggs and spring flowers, but a hint of the Resurrection will be hard to find. Now, all this begins with the designers of the cards. And even in this business one comes upon that same policy of declaring Anti-Semitic everything that is Christian. If Rabbi Coffee says the New Testament is the most Anti-Semitic book ever written, what must be the judgment on an Easter card that is truly an Easter card?

In November, 1919, the Anti-Defamation Committee claimed that 150 American cities had excluded "The Merchant of Venice" from the public schools. The newspapers at this writing are announcing that David Warfield, the great Jewish actor, is going to play "Shylock" in the manner which, as he believes, represents the true Shakespeare conception. The Anti-Defamation League may yet find itself to have expended much

energy beating the wind, especially as the best Shakespearean critics declare that "The Merchant of Venice" is not about a Jew at all, but about Usury as a vicious practice which gripped both Jew and non-Jew and brought division.

There was, however, a certain finesse in the manner of the Anti-Defamation League in approaching the matter of the exclusion of the "Merchant." It was not an incapacity to appreciate the fine work of Shakespeare. Oh, not, anything but that. Nor was it a confession of thin-skinned sensibility on the part of Jews. Not at all. No, it was really for the benefit of the Gentile children that the Anti-Defamation League wanted them kept away from that play in their reading lessons.

### Here Are Their Reasons

HERE are excerpts from one of the letters sent out from the Anti-Defamation League in Chicago to the superintendent of public schools in an important city. The italics are ours:

"We have just been advised that the . . . high schools still retain "The Merchant of Venice" in the list of required readings . . .

"We do not base our request because of the embarrassment which may be caused to the Jewish students in class, nor is our attitude in this regard based on thin-skinned sensitiveness. It is the result of mature consideration and investigation. Our objection is made *because of its effect upon the non-Jewish children* who subconsciously will associate in their own minds the Jew as Shakespeare portrayed him with the Jew of today. Children are not analysts. A character in the past vividly portrayed exists for them in the present. The Jew of Shakespeare lives in the mind of the child as the Jew of New York, or the Jew of Chicago, or the Jew of Newark. Your teachers of literature might say much in favor of Shylock's good qualities, but our experience has been that only very seldom are Shylock's good qualities brought out strongly before children. Those traits of his character which are brought out most vividly in the study of the play are Shylock's greed, hatred, revenge and cruelty.

"The fact that the College Entrance Requirements Board realized the justice of our stand and struck the play off from the list as required readings for entrance to our universities and colleges indicates clearly that it is a most serious problem . . .

" . . . We believe that when you realize the great harm which might be caused to hundreds and thousands of law-abiding Jewish citizens of this country, you will grant our request that the reading of 'The Merchant of Venice' be discontinued from your schools."

### To Do Away With Shakespeare?

AND in this case it was. Notwithstanding the fact that the play was used in the *high school*, and the argument of the letter was addressed to the effect of the play on *children*, it was discontinued. A study of the schedule of just what occurred showed that everything had been made ready even before the letter was written.

Does this frittering away of Jewish influence strike the Jewish leaders as a wise policy?

Is there any hope whatever of doing away with 'The Merchant of Venice'?

Do they not know that it is the observation of teachers of literature that even if non-Jewish children are forbidden to read the play, Jewish children are going to read it anyway, since it is the Jewish children who must heartily enjoy it because they more clearly understand it?

Do not the Jewish leaders know that non-Jews do not read the "Merchant" for Shylock, except perhaps

his noble defense of the Jew as a human being? Whoever hears Shylock quoted in anything but this, which numerous Jewish writers delight to quote?—

"I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions?"

To effect its purpose the Anti-Defamation League will have to perform an excision on our common English tongue. The wise and witty sayings of this Shakespearean play have passed into the permanent coinage of daily speech.

"I hold the world a stage where every man must play his part; and mine a sad one."

" . . . I am Sir Oracle,  
And when I ope my lips let no dog bark!"

"If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches, and poor men's cottages princes' palaces."

"The Devil can cite Scripture for his purpose."

"A goodly apple rotten at the heart:

O, what a goodly outside falsehood hath!"

"Truth will come to sight; murder cannot be hid long."

"All that glitters is not gold."

"A harmless necessary cat."

"The quality of mercy is not strained,  
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven  
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest:  
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.

. . . . .  
It is an attribute of God himself;  
And earthly power doth then show likest God's,  
When mercy seasons justice."

### Their Course a Mistake

THIS is beyond the power of the Anti-Defamation League to destroy. Shylock may be forgotten, but not these living lines. It is true, however, that in 150 American cities, according to the league's claim, school children are prevented reading and hearing these words in school.

But is it worth it? Is it a part of "Jewish Rights" that an admittedly great play, taught in all the English courses of all the universities, should be prohibited to the children of the people in the public schools?

From the prohibition of the Bible to the prohibition of Shakespeare, the whole Jewish course has been a colossal mistake, the reaction from which will be to belittle Jewish public judgment in the future.

It was all very well said by a correspondent to the Newark *Evening News*, January 13, 1920:

"To the Editor of the *News*:

"Sir—Protests have been made by the representatives of the Jewish, Scotch and colored races against Shakespeare's being used in the public schools, the former because of the portrayal of Shylock in "The Merchant of Venice." Some Scotch folk have protested, as I understand it, to the Newark Board of Education, on account of the character given Macbeth. The colored folks, judging from the letter printed in the *News* from Washington, do not like the character Othello, owing to his despicable treatment of Desdemona. As a descendant of the Welsh race, I enter my protest in behalf of that ancient people in regard to Shakespeare's ridicule in Henry V, of the Welshman, Captain Fluellen, who is made to look as if he did not know anything about war.

"I have no doubt that others could find fault with Shakespeare's penchant for holding up the weak side of some of his characters, so I think that Shakespeare and the Bible might well be kept out of the public schools because both books are rough on certain people whose identity is clearly shown. The board of education is to be congratulated for taking action in the matter, which promises at this late date to place the Newark educational system in a class all by itself."

According to a Vienna dispatch, the Austrian Government has instructed its Paris representatives, Eichhoff and Tarnoczky, to take up with the League of Nations the question of the expulsion of several thousand Jewish refugees from Central European lands. Although leading Austrian Jews agree with the government that the presence of these invaders is seriously intensifying the food situation, wealthy American Jews are exercising influence against their return to Poland, Russia and the Ukraine, with the design of enabling them instead to emigrate to the United States.

The Paris press is much stirred up over alleged discoveries by the French secret police, *service de sûreté*, that Dr. Max Nordau, Zionist leader, has been acting as go-between for the French communists in dealings with Krassin, the Bolshevik commissary.

## Jewish World Notes

Now we have the editor of the *Jewish Sentinel*, of Chicago, telling us that an "Anti-Semite" is "an individual of low morality and intelligence who displays animosity toward the Jews." He goes on: "There was a time when we had the right to look upon an 'anti-Semite' as a man who dislikes the Jews and who would not associate with them. Today, however, we must look upon every 'Anti-Semite' as upon a murderer and criminal, because what the 'Anti-Semites' are out for today is to kill Jews." Can it be possible that this editor's readers have so little intelligence as to swallow propaganda of this sort?

The recently published reminiscences of Siegmund Mayer, the Austrian Jewish leader who died last October in his ninetieth year, throw much light on the development of Jewish influence in Austria and in Europe generally. When Mayer was a member of the

Vienna city council he had an encounter with Carl Lueger, a colleague. Lueger said the Jews ought to go to Palestine. Mayer rejoined, "If the Jews are too much for you, you may go to Palestine!"

Sir Alfred Mond, prominent Zionist and commissioner of public works in Lloyd George's Government, announces that he has purchased a piece of land on the shores of the Sea of Galilee and will build a bungalow on it for his summer vacations.

A book containing 236 pages of the first twenty articles on *The International Jew* will be sent to any address, upon receipt of 25 cents in stamps to cover printing and mailing cost.